

New York Tribune.

First to Last—The Truth—News—Editorials—Advertisements.

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When Albany Probes the City.

Mayor Mitchell's plea that the legislative committee directed to investigate New York City's finances organize at once, perform its work and report in time to permit Governor Whitman to save the metropolitan area from a \$14,000,000 share of an outrageous direct tax will hardly be granted. It is unlikely that the Mayor has any expectation that it will be. The legislative policy patently is to make New York City pay for local pay upstate, and to give no need to the representatives of the unlucky taxpayers here who want to enter a protest. Under the circumstances, official action which might conceivably disclose the injustice of the Albany policy before it has been fully carried out is not to be thought of.

When this legislative investigation comes the city has only one desire—that it be thorough and impartial. Other city administrations might have had cause for worry over such a probing. This one has none. That is not to say that it has been a perfect administration, without mistakes or shortcomings. It has been quite human enough to have its share of both. But it has been honest and it has been economical.

Its budget this year was smaller, in appropriations for departments under the Mayor, Controller and Borough Presidents, than the preceding budget. There was no "pork." Operating expenses of the municipal government, save those imposed by statute and the interest on outstanding debts, are at rock bottom or are rapidly being put there. Moreover, through the adoption of the "pay-as-you-go" idea of financing non-self-supporting future improvements the debt-carrying costs will be materially lessened in the long run, and the city's finances will be on a sounder basis than ever before.

All this a fair investigation must disclose. Likewise it must reveal the responsibility of Albany for heavy fixed expenses of city and county government which do not come under the pruning power of the Board of Estimate. Also it must show that the taxpayers of New York have the present Legislature to thank for a 17.5 point raise in next year's tax rate—unless Governor Whitman has the courage to veto the direct tax bill.

If such findings—and such findings there must be, if the committee does its work thoroughly and honestly—bring about a different attitude on the part of future legislatures toward this city, New York will have no cause to regret the investigation. If the inquiry results in placing in the hands of the city authorities complete power over expenditures paid for out of the city's tax levy—a power this Legislature has refused to grant—it will have been of great benefit to us here. If it shows conclusively enough to impress Albany the inequity of extracting huge direct tax payments from New Yorkers to finance upstate improvements, this city will be the gainer.

But if the investigation turns out to be a mere "fishing excursion" or a political attempt to divert the very real issue which the city now has against the state authorities on this subject of taxation, the lawmakers would better not have undertaken it! Inadequately represented, unjustly taxed, New Yorkers still have votes, and they are amply able to use them.

The Wage Earner's Dollar.

Professor Irving Fisher, of Yale, has come to the rescue of the wage earner with the suggestion that the dollar be standardized as a unit, not of coin weight but of value. So long as gold remains the standard and its volume increases his suggestion is one which the wage earner may entertain with hope and pleasure. But once let the production of gold fall off and its exchange value increase and then it will be the turn of the wage payer to bless the professor.

Professor Fisher has pointed out that in the last eighteen years the man of fixed income, whether from wages or bonds, has lost a third of his former purchasing power, due to the general increase of prices, the familiar "high cost of living," which of course is simply another name for the reduced value of gold. To save him from further loss the economist would have the amount of gold in the dollar increased to offset its growing cheapness, so that the dollar might continue to possess the same potency. The idea is highly ingenious, since, contrary to the popular notion once fervently fostered by Mr. Bryan, as money cheapens it is the poor man, not the rich, who suffers. That is, wages never rise fast enough or far enough to keep pace with rising prices, while profits feel their stimulus immediately.

But it is also true that when prices fall, when gold becomes dearer, wages do not fall as fast or as far, though profits take the tumble without hesitation. The money of the man who keeps his job, therefore, will buy him more under those

conditions, unless, of course, in accordance with Professor Fisher's plan, the dollar is made a unit of value and the amount of gold in it reduced to offset the greater scarcity of the metal.

Now, the amount of gold in this world is limited. Some time or other its production must dwindle. Whether the wage earner and bondholder would profit in the long run from the adoption of Professor Fisher's suggestion depends on the proximity of this period of diminishing returns. It might conceivably be not very far off.

Water on Both Shoulders.

Considering the disregard for "the labor" vote which the majority at Albany displayed in manhandling the workmen's compensation law and the Labor Department, its tenderness in refusing to repeal the full crew law seems like straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. The compromise bill, which would have enabled the Public Service Commission to determine the necessity for extra men in train crews, as stipulated by that law, was not adequate. Nevertheless, it would have been better than the existing statute. It at least afforded opportunity for an inquiry into the situation which does not now exist.

Having refused to adopt even this measure, the Legislature placed itself in the position of offending "labor" under circumstances where the arguments of labor advocates coincided with the great body of independent, disinterested public sentiment and of backing up "labor" where the labor advocates had a weak, if not wholly meritless, case. Such a course may be good politics and good lawmaking, but it does not seem like either. An effort to carry water on both shoulders is never easy and seldom successful.

The War Makers.

In one quality at least Professor Edmund von Mach surpasses his distinguished rival, Dr. Dernburg—in richness and exuberance of imagination. He has not only satisfied himself that the war was brought about by England's great mischief maker, Sir Edward Grey, but is persuaded that simple-minded France and ill-fated Russia are of his own mind and that "their hatred of the British increases every day."

On Saturday night his enthusiasm carried him even further, when he confided to his audience that Britain itself was turning against the arch-conspirator; that recent "English estimates" were altogether in accord with his own; nay, that some sober thinkers in that country were of opinion that the government "ought to try him for treason and send him to the gallows."

That the professor would regard this course as entirely reasonable may well be imagined; the mischief is, however, that the punishment, if carried out by England, would but avenge England's wrongs. Now, what grieves him is, as he explains, not merely that the Foreign Secretary has "betrayed his own country," but that he actually "lured Russia" into the pernicious enterprise of which the consequences are now apparent.

All of which is very enlightening, but grievously inconsistent with the opinion of Professor von Mach's imperial master, who in August last delivered through Herr Ballin the following message for British consumption: "It must be stated again: Russia alone forces the war upon Europe. Russia alone must carry the full weight of responsibility." Great Britain, by the way, had not declared war when this notable utterance was published. Let us therefore be patient: it may yet be found that some country not hitherto engaged is responsible for the luring of Sir Edward Grey.

Vicious Anti-Americanism.

It is amazing to what lengths some of the hyphenated newspapers in this country are willing to go in order to foment a spirit of anti-Americanism among the alien elements which have settled here. On Saturday, for example, the "New Yorker Herald" printed an editorial whose chief purpose was apparently to demonstrate the importance of united political action on the part of German-Americans. The German-American youth, it said, ought to be instructed as to the practical value of solidarity, since in that way only could the German element here maintain its position against the English-American element, defend its own rights, and prevent discriminations directed against it.

To drive this advice home the article charged that discriminations are now made against naturalized citizens which have no warrant in the Constitution. The expatriation law was mentioned as one of these, since it puts a limitation (and a very wise one, at that) on the liberty of an alien naturalized here to return for an indefinite residence in the land of his birth or former allegiance. The discrimination of the government (also fully justified) to send naturalized citizens as diplomatic or consular officers to the countries of their birth was also criticized.

But the limit of vicious anti-Americanism was reached in the statement that no naturalized citizen can become a Federal judge, according to our unwritten law, whatever judicial qualifications he possesses and however pure and fine his character may be. Moreover, according to the "Herald's" critic, "in the government offices in Washington one finds almost no naturalized Americans; the officials are mostly impoverished dependents of old American families, who have gotten their jobs through pull."

The charge that no naturalized citizen can become a Federal judge is a malicious invention. There have been three justices of the Supreme Court of foreign birth. Sanford B. Dole, one of the Federal District Judges for the District of Hawaii, was born a Hawaiian. Jacob Trieber, District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas, was born in Germany. There is no prohibition, written or unwritten,

against the appointment of foreign-born citizens to the Federal bench any more than there is against the choice of foreign-born citizens as state judges.

As to the charge that almost no foreign-born citizens ever get into office in Washington, it is enough to call attention to the fact that in the Cabinet of President Wilson there are two secretaries of foreign birth, Franklin K. Lane and William B. Wilson. In President Roosevelt's Cabinet there were also two secretaries of foreign birth, Oscar S. Straus and James Wilson. One of them, Mr. Wilson, served besides under President McKinley and under President Taft. Mr. Lehmann, President Taft's first Solicitor General, was born in Germany.

Insinuations that Americans of foreign birth are discriminated against in politics can mislead only the thoughtless or the ignorant. They are all the more contemptible because of that.

The United States is a land of opportunity for all who are willing to become earnest and genuine Americans. The meanest anti-Americans among us are those who try to propagate Old World enmities here and to set one class of naturalized citizens against another class or against the native-born element in our population.

Quarantine Unpreparedness.

The whole country is, of course, profoundly interested in the efficient conduct of the quarantine station at this port. That in itself would seem sufficient reason for giving the whole country some control of it, through the Federal Health Service. Even supposing that we of New York State were convinced that we provided a proper quarantine service free from the disintegrating influence of politics, the rest of the United States could hardly be expected to share our confidence.

But we are not so convinced. Indeed, following the dismissal of Dr. Doty by Governor Dix, a plain patronage grab in the face of a European cholera epidemic, we are convinced that the contrary may well be the case. And when Dr. J. A. Nydegger, head of the Federal Health Service at the Port of Baltimore, tells us, as he did Saturday, that "to put the New York Quarantine Station in first-class condition—such a condition as would fit it to cope with the situation, it may have to face—would require the outlay of a great deal of money," we are not surprised. A politically controlled office rarely spends its generous appropriations to good effect.

Furthermore, with the coming of the hot weather, with the redoubting of hell-gent effort and the increasing exhaustion of the millions of combatants, the deadly epidemics in Europe are bound to grow in number and to spread. Typhus, cholera, smallpox, bubonic plague—these have already made good headway in supplementing the destruction wrought by bullets, but, unlike bullets, their range has no limit. Sooner or later they will besiege our peaceful shores in the persons of immigrants seeking admission. The danger from them may be imminent, in Dr. Nydegger's opinion.

In the circumstances, therefore, it seems particularly unfair that the country should be asked to depend for its good health on state control of the New York Quarantine Station. It seems especially imperative at this time that this control be transferred to the highly efficient Federal Health Service, whose ramifications are country-wide and whose personnel is comparatively free from political pressure. The fact that the Academy of Medicine strongly advocates the transfer should incline us all the more in its favor. However unprepared we may prefer to remain in a military way, let us at least get ready for the invasion of pestilence.

The Legislature wasn't satisfied to dig a hole just big enough to accommodate itself. In the pit it excavated there is room for all Republicans—and that, too, without uncomfortable crowding.

Mr. Murphy is about the only spectator who was sorry to see the Legislature go.

Russia in the Sciences.

In the sciences Russia has done admirable work in the right spirit, and if it is less well known than it deserves to be it is because the Russians are not advertisers. How many English boys know that it was a Russian, Lobachevsky, who discovered the non-Euclidean geometry which has revolutionized the sciences? Or how many boys who study chemistry remember that it was the speculation of a Russian, Mendeleev, which changed (by his periodic law of the elements) the whole current of thought among chemical investigators? As for history, Russians have made the Byzantine age their own. No specialist can afford to ignore their researches. It was a Russian again, M. Vinogradov, who inspired F. W. Maitland's history and was the discoverer of Bracton's Notebook, one of the invaluable documents in English history.

A Dangerous Precedent.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: It seems to me that the United States "Ship of State" should be violently rocked unless diplomacy totally ignores horse sense in its practice. The helmsman appears to be dozing and dreaming of universal peace, and the watch must be asleep. I refer to the treatment accorded the two foreign warships at Newport News, which sets what appears to be a highly dangerous precedent to this country, and one which will be difficult to evade in the future. If, as you have editorially suggested, this treatment was prompted in order to placate the German-American voters, the offense is doubly culpable. In answering England's mild protest Secretary Bryan excuses himself for the failure to guard his country's interests by stating that the extent of the repairs, etc., is a matter for which the local port authorities are responsible and have full discretion.

It is not to be wondered at that no vigorous protest was made by the European nations involved, for in case of war with the United States the precedent established will be of great value for naval and transport purposes. With Mexico and Canada following this precedent, any European or Asiatic power at war with the United States will have difficulties removed, and it will be easy to involve any country of America in future troubles. Would the same treatment have been given a fleet of long range submarines? New York, April 23, 1915. G. RAE.

UNFAIR REPRESENTATION

Second Choice Candidates and Majority Rule Needed.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: Unquestionably the Constitutional Convention will provide for some fairer basis of representation for this city in future legislatures. The present representation is too glaringly unjust to be permitted to continue. It is no more unjust and unfair, however, than is the disfranchisement of any qualified voter, regardless of sex, and neither of these is worse than the system which enables a plurality vote to elect any legislator or official.

In most cases this is government by a minority. It is not truly democratic. It is a usurpation of the rights of the majority. Except in a few isolated cases majorities do not rule under the present system. A majority of the voters did not elect the present President of the United States or the present city administration. They are not the choice of a majority of voters. They can fairly claim only to represent the minority of voters who supported them. All the others were in effect disfranchised by law and have no voice in the government.

No greater abuse than this is possible. It is a fraud practiced upon a minority of voters in these and in every such case. No Democrat can in principle or policy claim to represent a Republican, or vice versa. More partisan representation or party government is necessary. When an elected candidate is chosen by a majority vote to promote a certain policy or principle he can claim to represent that policy or principle. If our election system was such that the voters could determine by referendum such policy or principle this would be the voice of the majority. In the absence of such a system of instruction the average legislator or official is a politician with it. They all do it. Hence reforms, like female suffrage, local option and prohibition, suffer. Is not minority representation fair and just? Why not give the voter a second choice of candidates on Election Day, or even in party primaries? Such a system would more nearly approximate the majority rule. The only true democratic principle to elect officials is by majorities, not pluralities. The latter is both false and unjust. It is an abuse and should be ended. Will the Constitutional Convention enable and empower the Legislature to end it?

J. L. MITCHELL.

Brooklyn, April 22, 1915.

Hints to German Street Orators.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: I do not know if you will publish this letter from an Englishman, who, after enjoying and profiting from this country's hospitality at intervals for nearly a quarter of a century, has up to now tried to hold his tongue and appear as neutral as possible, but who, after walking up last night from the City Hall to Columbus circle and stopping to listen to the many groups of street orators standing around the bulletin boards, finds it quite impossible to refrain from suggesting a few extra topics for them.

The writer was much struck by the fact that the majority of the argument leaders, many of them apparently trained speakers, had such a strong German accent and evidently had their points for argument and discussion well cut and dried.

The new points I would suggest are: 1. If the German submarines are so wonderful, why do they not stop the British transports, which are carrying an average of 15,000 troops a day across the English Channel, instead of wasting their torpedoes on harmless merchant and fishing vessels carrying only non-belligerent men, women and children, and in many cases not even belonging to the fighting nations? 2. Why, when crying out in horror at the threat of Britain to blockade Germany and cut off supplies, so possibly starving German women and children, do they not go to one of the public libraries and read an account of the siege of Paris in the '70's, when the shoe was on the other foot?

chanta deliver the goods on the dock. It is then up to the buyers to find and protect the ships carrying the cargoes across the ocean. 4. If England has been preparing for this war so long, why did Queen Victoria give Heligoland as a present to her German nephew in 1890, and how is it that last August found her so utterly unprepared? 5. The writer would also like to know how many of the leaders of these street talks are under Dr. Dernburg's direction and air his views at so much an hour.

6. And, finally, if these street patriots have the Fatherland's cause so much at heart, why do they not go home and help her fight? Heads count more than words, but again a naval escort might be needed.

To save the obvious reply, if you print this, I may add that I am over military age or should not be here. SANPER.

New York, April 23, 1915.

Transfer the Quarantine Station.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: As the matter of maritime quarantine belongs to the national rather than the state government, as is clearly demonstrated by the results obtained in San Francisco and fifty or more other stations, I trust my old friend The Tribune will sustain the Academy of Medicine in its efforts to have Governor Whitman take steps to have the Quarantine station ceded over to the national government.

This is logically a part of the immigration service, and as this port stands first, and, unfortunately so, as a receiving station for foreign diseases as well as merchandise and as a distributing center for the whole country, it is our duty to prepare now for the incoming after the European war of many quarantine diseases, which are sure to be a source of grave danger to this country. The one word "typhus" is enough in itself to suggest no end of serious reflection and justifiable fear.

The Federal government has thrown upon New York many grievous burdens in the matter of not properly restricted immigration, costing us millions of dollars annually, and it is fitting now that Governor Whitman should take measures to act promptly in this matter of the transfer of the quarantine into the control of the national government, so that our already overburdened city may escape what is likely to prove another and seriously perplexing responsibility.

J. C. PUMPELLY.

New York, April 23, 1915.

The Home vs. the Saloon.

To the Editor of The Tribune. Sir: The letter of F. C. Scudder on "Home-Destroying Ballots" is a fair example of the sense of justice of a large percentage of men. He says: "A number of women would undoubtedly demand office, and others would have offices tendered to them for political purposes. Do you think this further invasion of man's sphere will tend to keep the home life, which you will admit is the foundation of our social life, intact?"

There is no anxiety about the "home" when women go out to work, which takes them out of the home, in work and transit, twelve hours a day, such as working in stores and factories and scrubbing office floors, but the moment that there is any danger of a woman's getting a "soft job" it is "invasion of man's sphere" and there is great alarm about "the home."

Nearly 4,000,000 women are now voting in this country alone, and we do not hear anything about destruction of "the home" where they vote, and no state has repealed the law of equality. He asks "Will it not make marriage less attractive to women?" If men would be decent themselves and treat women as companions and equals and would ask women to marry to make marriage more "attractive to women."

The trouble with "the home" is that too many men prefer the saloon to the home and prefer the painted and perfumed public woman to honest, faithful, hard working, true, home-making women. GEORGE M. BEERBOWER.

New York, April 23, 1915.

DAVID A. MATTHEWS.

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